

# LIBERTY & LAW CENTER NEWSLETTER

## SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear Friends of the Liberty & Law Center,

We hope you all had a wonderful summer. The Liberty & Law Center is delighted to share some updates on our work and to tell you about what we have planned for this semester.

Over the summer, we published two additional op-eds that originated from research presented at our Second Annual Voices for Liberty Symposium. In addition, we held two community webinars with our Voices for Liberty authors. As part of the broader Voices for Liberty Initiative, we will also host 25 campus events at universities this semester to spark meaningful conversations on free speech, civil rights, and social movements. We are also excited to kick off the Free Speech Clinic's eighth year, welcoming eight new future free speech advocates. This semester, we are also teaching new batch of students in our Public Interest Litigation Training Program, equipping them with hands-on experience in public interest litigation.

We are excited for the semester ahead and all the work we have planned. Thank you for being part of our community. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our partners and donors. Your commitment is essential to the Center's success, and we are deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

David E. Bernstein  
Executive Director  
Liberty & Law Center

JoAnn Koob  
Director and Free Speech Clinic Fellow  
Liberty & Law Center

# PROGRAM AND EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Voices for Liberty: Free Speech, Civil Rights and Social Progress

**Voices for Liberty Community Webinar:** This summer, Voices for Liberty hosted two engaging Community Webinars. Our first event featured Dr. Claudia Kramer, Probasco Distinguished Chair of Free Enterprise and Professor of Economics at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Dr. Kramer presented her research paper, “Spewing Hate or Speaking Tolerance: How Free Speech Affects Social Norms and Minority Rights.” Her work introduces new survey data and empirical findings that examine how freedom of expression influences racial tolerance and the protection of minority rights in over 100 countries. She was joined in conversation by Jacob Mchangama, Founder and Executive Director of The Future of Free Speech, and Tim Hoefer from the Voices for Liberty team. You can watch the full [webinar recording here](#).

Our second session featured Joshua McDaniel, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, who discussed his paper, “How Religious Minorities Helped Secure Secular Rights.” McDaniel explored the pivotal role of the Jehovah’s Witnesses in shaping civil rights protections through the U.S. Supreme Court, highlighting the strategies behind their success and the lessons they offer today. He was joined by Debi Ghate, Initiative Director at Voices for Liberty, for panel conversation on these topics. [Watch the full webinar here](#).

**Campus Events:** During the spring semester, VFLI hosted 23 campus events, raising the total to more than 100 across liberal arts colleges, large universities, and global campuses. These conversations covered topics such as free speech and censorship, student protests, how to best protect minorities, and the value of counterspeech. Highlights included visits to Columbia University, where we held productive conversations in the midst of free speech controversy, and a trip to the National Civil Rights Conference at Fisk University to talk with past and future civil rights leaders. VFLI is still considering sponsorship for events this fall. If you’re on campus or have a campus connection, reach out at [vfli@gmu.edu](mailto:vfli@gmu.edu) to learn more about hosting [one of our speakers](#). We’d love to help bring a conversation about free speech and civil rights to your university!

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**Op-eds:** This summer, we published two additional op-eds related to research done by our Voices for Liberty Initiative authors. All of the original research is available on the Liberty & Law Center's [SSRN page](#).

The first op-ed, "*American Pope Is a Reminder: Religious Freedom Includes the Freedom to Believe Nothing at All*," by Katherine McKerall, is originated from her paper [Free Speech, Fighting Faiths, and Nones: Blasphemy and Offensive Speech in the United States](#). In this op-ed, the author emphasizes that true religious freedom encompasses the right to explore, adopt, critique, or abandon religious belief altogether without fear of government reprisal, highlighting the importance of defending this freedom for all individuals.

The second op-ed, "*The Supreme Court Term Is Over. One of Its Most Famous Losers Deserves a Victory Lap*," by Anastasia Boden is based on her paper [Myra Bradwell and the Chicago Legal News: Speech and the March for All Civil Rights](#). The op-ed highlights Myra Bradwell, a 19th-century woman denied the right to practice law, and shows how she used journalism and activism to advance women's legal and economic rights. It argues that her story proves free speech and other rights are deeply connected and essential for justice.

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**Public Discourse Project:** The Liberty & Law Center's civil discourse program, Discussion Over Division, will now be required for all first-year Scalia Law students. To kick the year off, we will host three Discussion Over Division events this fall semester. Through these events, students will engage in civil discourse and chat in small groups with fellow students about current free speech issues. Some of the topics we are covering for the upcoming events include current free speech controversies and upcoming Supreme Court cases.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Please save the date for *The Other Declarations of 1776 Conference*, jointly organized with the Institute for Justice, on April 10, 2026. Additional details will be shared in the coming months.

### Contact us:



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